

there's a little bit of pigeon-toe. I'd like to open that out. Also, the left hock's swollen, but I think that's due to injury, and should clear right up. I like the testicular development very much."

The young owners line up to collect ribbons and/or contain tears. The first-place owner has shiny blonde hair in a thick braid, and bright blue eyes, but they have a sullen cast, and her hips are wide, even at 17. The second-place owner has acne, and a big nose, and plods like an old farmer through muddy fields. The judge stomps around the pen, smoothing sawdust with a push-broom. Fifty pounds of belly bobs and sways over his silver-dollar belt. He drops his weight down on his heels as he walks, boot-toes curled up like an elf's. His hair is black but thinning and the fat around his eyes makes him squint as he lowers his head to scrutinize the vulvular placement of the next group of two-year-old York swine.

#### BORN TO WHINE

Misfortune smiles on you.  
Your limousine never arrives on time.  
Your ship comes in spice-laden,  
and you ordered tea.

Your parents' failures maimed you;  
their success did too.  
You've always been too short, too tall, too slow,  
too fast, too stupid, too bright for this benighted world.

Your victories are always tainted;  
your losses, never fair.  
The geiger counter of your brain endlessly ticks  
off the world's inequities.

Valdictorian of sorrow,  
disaster's pop quiz won't catch you unprepared.  
Knight of despair, you clank through life in full armor,  
sweaty and chafed, into a cloud of mustard gas.

Your friends flee, frightened by your groans,  
which gives you better cause to groan.  
Fortunate unfortunate,  
bad weather will never disappoint you.

You never lose sleep perfecting an acceptance speech,  
or strain credulity making the best of things.  
The desert wind will always parch you;  
the rain will wreck your hair.



You will inveigh against the worthlessness of "things,"  
buy every egg-peeler, every pewter frog.  
Time will prove most of your dire predictions true.  
About the rest, you'll sigh and say "Just wait and see."

You will impress with your perspicacity.  
You may be taken for a seer.  
You will be blessed with endless invention.  
You will never be at a loss for words.

— Charles Webb

Los Angeles CA

#### SOMETIMES MARRIED GUYS GET PHONE CALLS LIKE THIS AT NIGHT FROM THEIR UNMARRIED FRIENDS

Got a call from Larry out in Victorville. Says the high desert doesn't agree with his sinuses, says he'll be rollin' back into town soon. Just might have (if you can believe it) worn out his welcome at his brother Skip's house due to an incident at the nudist colony, something to do with a young girl (I'm not givin' you details; it was a misunderstanding) that caused Skip to be put on probation with those good folks and caused Larry to be banned from the place for life.

Anyway, Larry says he'll be rollin' in in a day or two, wonders if he might drop by for supper. I told him sure, sounds great. When I hung up, Monica rolled over and said, "That asshole's not spending one night under this roof, and if you won't tell him I will."

#### LARRY'S BACK IN TOWN

The wife had said, "Just dinner, then he's back out on the street again." But Larry's out in the kitchen talkin' shit to her, making her laugh as she stirs the gravy, spoons rice into a serving bowl.

"Hey, lovebirds," I call out to them. "Outa there with the food, goddam it. I'm a hungry man." They have had, those two, carnal knowledge of each other, a bump-and-go affair 18 or 19 years ago, before she and I got hitched, when we all ran together as a crowd.

The wife squeals and lunges out of the kitchen with the pork chops, goosed or pinched on the butt is my guess.